
Chapter I – Introduction and Overview

Introduction	I-1
Authority	I-1
Proposed Federal Action	I-3
Purpose and Need	I-3
Objectives	I-4
Scope and Structure of the Resource Management Plan and Environmental Assessment	I-5
Overview of the Study Area and Background	I-6
Public Involvement	I-8
Agency Consultation and Coordination	I-11



Introduction and Overview

INTRODUCTION

Much of the same information and analyses required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is included in a Resource Management Plan (RMP); therefore, the RMP for Canyon Ferry Reservoir (figure I-1) is formatted as a combined Resource Management Plan/Environmental Assessment (RMP/EA) document that meets the requirements of NEPA. Because the alternatives developed for the RMP portion of the document are general, the NEPA portion of the document will be programmatic. Before implementing the RMP, site-specific NEPA analysis will be required.

The RMP portion of the document describes the management framework; the needs, opportunities, and constraints; public issues and concerns; Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) goals and objectives; and specific management objectives and actions for the study area. It also provides a history and baseline for measuring the progress and success of proposed management actions.

The EA component of this document sets forth two action alternatives and the No Action Alternative for the Canyon Ferry Reservoir (study area) and identifies the preferred alternative of the three alternatives considered and analyzed in this document. Existing resource and environmental factors are described as well as the potential effects of all the alternatives on these resources and environmental factors. The resources and environmental factors described and analyzed in this document include water, soils, vegetation, fish and wildlife, cultural, recreation, threatened and endangered species, visual, Indian Trust Assets (ITAs), Indian sacred sites, hydrology, climate, air, social, economic, environmental justice, transportation, land use, and noise.

AUTHORITY

Title 28 of Public Law (P.L.) 102-575, Section 2805 (106 Stat. 4690, Reclamation Recreation Management Act of October 30, 1992), provides Reclamation with authority to prepare RMPs. Title X of P.L. 105-277 (Title X) provides Reclamation authority to plan, develop, operate, and maintain recreation and fish and wildlife resources at Canyon Ferry Reservoir.

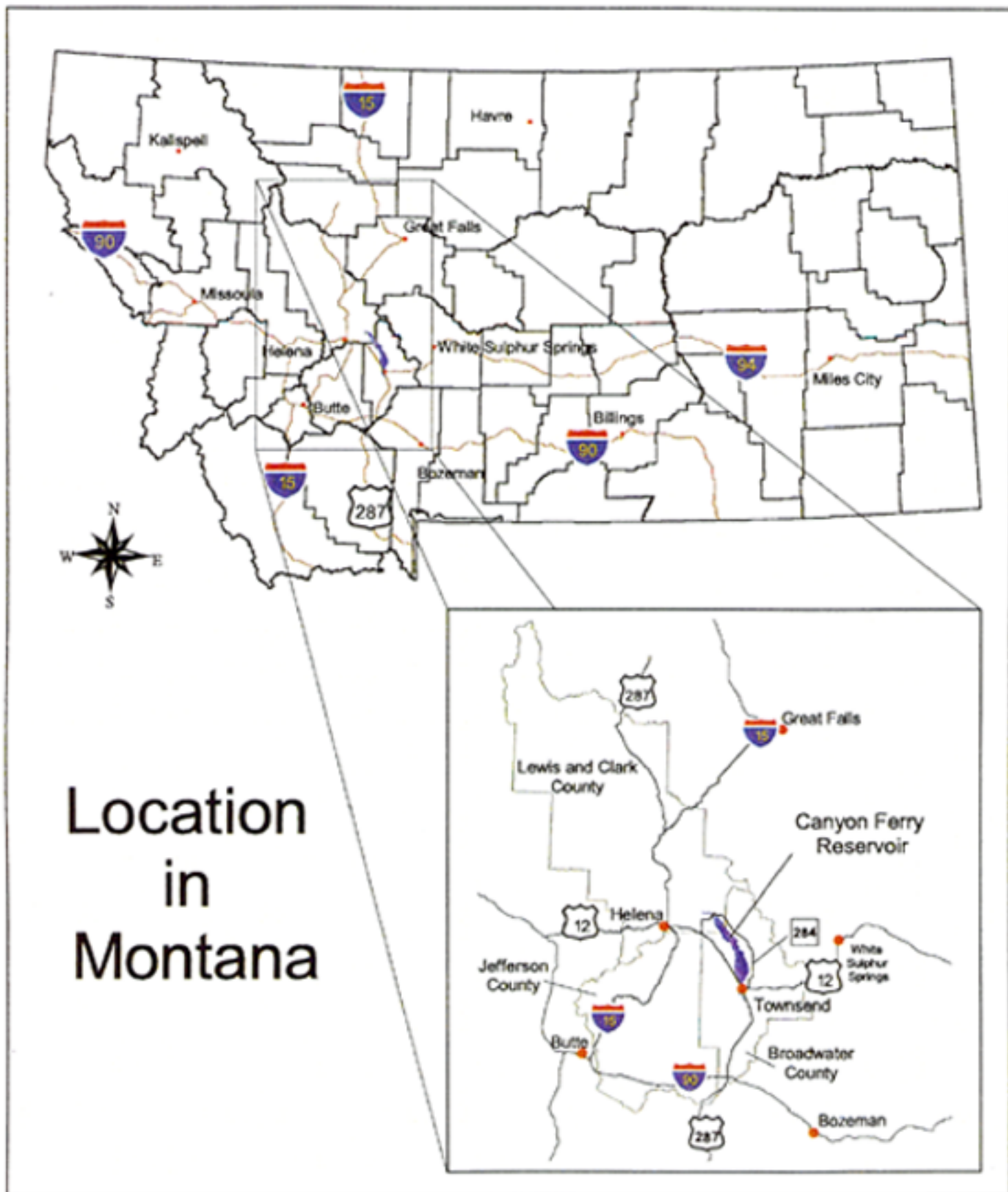


Figure I-1

PROPOSED FEDERAL ACTION

Preparation and implementation of an RMP is a Federal action that is intended to direct the management of resources within the study area to maximize overall public and resource benefits for the next 10 years. NEPA requires Federal agencies to consider the potential impact(s) of a Federal action on the environment before implementing the proposed action. Therefore, a planning process and an appropriate level of environmental analysis were used to develop this RMP/EA. The RMP/EA will be used as the management framework for the reservoir and surrounding Reclamation lands.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of this RMP/EA is to establish a 10-year conceptual plan detailing the management framework for the conservation, protection, enhancement, development, and use of the physical and biological resources at Canyon Ferry Reservoir. Water operations and power generation are not within the scope of this study.

The RMP/EA is needed to:

- R** Provide decisionmakers with consistent direction and guidance for the successful management of the environmental resources at the reservoir
- R** Ensure that management of the environmental resources will be compatible with authorized purposes of Reclamation's Canyon Ferry Unit of the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program
- R** Ensure that development of quality recreation facilities is compatible with other environmental resources and that planned developments are based on public need and the ability of the land and water resources to accommodate such facilities and increased visitor use
- R** Resolve resource management issues and concerns identified during the planning process. Issues and concerns were identified through public involvement and internal review of agency laws, regulations, policies, programs, and procedures

In response to changing conditions and to better meet the increasing demand for public outdoor recreation while protecting and enhancing our natural resources, an RMP/EA is clearly needed. In particular, P.L. 105-277, Title X, authorizes the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary), through Reclamation, to investigate, plan, construct, operate, and maintain public recreation facilities, as well as facilities for the conservation of fish and wildlife resources, and

directs the Secretary to sell 265 lease lots. The RMP/EA will guide decisionmakers in their efforts to accommodate the variety of demands that are being placed on the environmental resources at Canyon Ferry Reservoir.

OBJECTIVES

The overall objectives of the RMP/EA are to:

- R** Explore ways to enhance and protect the natural, recreational, esthetic, and heritage resources
- R** Determine the most appropriate uses for Reclamation lands and facilities
- R** Identify long-term programs that address public health and safety, fish and wildlife, and recreation
- R** Identify financially feasible opportunities or partnerships to assist in managing the resources
- R** Identify certain actions for implementation within the 10-year planning period that address the issues and concerns raised by the public

The overall objectives for completing an RMP/EA for Canyon Ferry Reservoir are consistent with the objectives identified in Reclamation's 2000-2005 *Strategic Plan*. Those objectives are to:

- R** Manage, develop, and protect water and related resources to meet the needs of current and future generations
- R** Operate, maintain, and rehabilitate facilities safely, reliably, and efficiently to provide project benefits
- R** Advance Reclamation's organizational effectiveness

Chapter VI contains specific Reclamation goals and accompanying objectives that were formulated as a result of the public involvement process and Reclamation's review of programs and policies.

SCOPE AND STRUCTURE OF THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The RMP/EA provides a conceptual framework for conserving, protecting, developing, using, enhancing, and managing Canyon Ferry Reservoir resources. The EA portion of this document will focus on broad impacts associated with the alternatives. NEPA compliance will be completed, and site-specific environmental and cultural clearances will be obtained before any ground-disturbing activities begin.

The following briefly describes, by chapter, the scope of the RMP/EA.

Chapter I: Introduction and Overview

Chapter I provides an introduction to and overview of the study area and sets forth the purpose of and need for an RMP/EA, authorities, overall objectives, public involvement process, and consultation and coordination efforts.

Chapter II: Management Framework

Chapter II establishes the management framework by describing the existing land uses at Canyon Ferry Reservoir, adjacent land uses, and the policies and programs affecting and/or influencing the use of Reclamation land and water areas.

Chapter III: Planning Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints

Chapter III summarizes the key factors that influenced the development of the RMP/EA by identifying the planning issues, opportunities, and constraints.

Chapter IV: Alternatives

Chapter IV describes the three alternatives, which includes the preferred alternative and the No Action Alternative, formulated in response to the issues identified by the public and Reclamation.

Chapter V: Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

Chapter V describes the affected environment (existing condition) of the study area and discusses the expected environmental consequences of implementing each of the proposed alternatives on specific resources and environmental factors.

Chapter VI: Resource Management Plan

Chapter VI describes the RMP, which is the preferred alternative selected by Reclamation. This chapter details the management strategies and directives for the study area for the next 10 years and the management goals and objectives.

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY AREA AND BACKGROUND

The Canyon Ferry Unit of the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program was authorized by the Flood Control Act of December 22, 1944, P.L. 534, as amended. The Canyon Ferry Unit is a multi-purpose project which makes important contributions to electrical power, flood control, the municipal water supply, and irrigation in the upper Missouri Basin. Located 50 miles downstream from where the Gallatin, Madison, and Jefferson Rivers join to form the Missouri River, Canyon Ferry Dam intercepts the runoff from about 15,904 square miles and stores the water in a 1,891,888-acre-foot reservoir at elevation 3797 feet, the top of the joint use pool. The reservoir allows irrigation development by regulating residual flows of the river to maintain capacity at the powerplant. In addition to providing power for irrigation, Canyon Ferry Powerplant provides low-cost energy for use by farm, residential, and municipal and industrial consumers.

The United States of America, Department of the Interior, Reclamation, holds the water right for water stored in Canyon Ferry Reservoir. Federal legislation authorizes the Secretary to contract to supply water for authorized purposes from Federal storage facilities such as Canyon Ferry Reservoir.

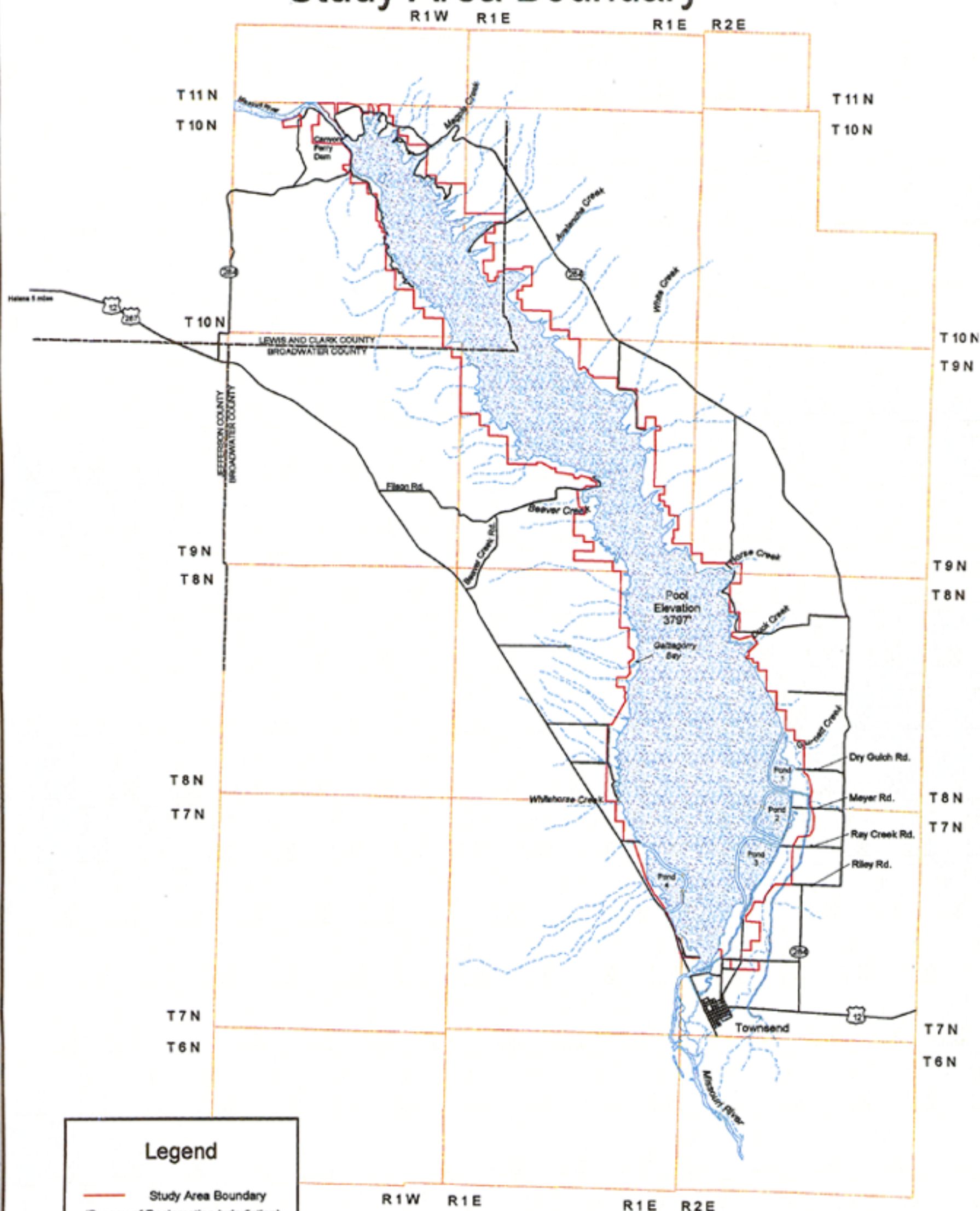
P.L. 89-72 (Federal Water Project Recreation Act of 1965) provides Reclamation with authority to only construct and maintain minimum basic recreation facilities. However, the passage of P.L. 105-277 in 1998 expanded the project purposes of the Canyon Ferry Unit by granting authority to Reclamation to plan, develop, operate, and maintain recreation and fish and wildlife resources in conjunction with the other authorized project purposes.

The primary study area covered in this plan includes all lands surrounding Canyon Ferry Reservoir that are under the jurisdiction and administration of Reclamation (see figure I-2 for the study area boundary). In addition, Reclamation lands and resources immediately downstream from the dam are included. Land adjoining Reclamation property is also considered if its current or known future use will significantly affect, or be affected by, policies and management proposals in this plan.

The study area encompasses about 9,360 land surface acres above reservoir elevation 3797 feet, with 96 miles of reservoir shoreline. The reservoir has about 33,500 water surface acres at

Canyon Ferry Reservoir

Study Area Boundary



Legend

— Study Area Boundary
(Bureau of Reclamation jurisdiction)

Hydrology

--- Intermittent
— Perennial
— Canal

2 0 2 4 Miles



elevation 3797 feet, extending upstream about 19 miles from Canyon Ferry Dam to a point where the Missouri River enters the reservoir at its southern end. Several side streams also feed the reservoir.

The study area lies in the jurisdiction of two counties—Lewis and Clark to the north and Broadwater to the south (see figure I-2). The nearest population centers are Townsend, about 3 miles south; Helena, about 15 miles northwest; and East Helena, about 12 miles northwest of Canyon Ferry Reservoir. The reservoir serves as a Statewide recreational facility, but most of the visitors come from within a 120-mile radius of the reservoir, including the towns of Great Falls, Butte, Missoula, and Bozeman.

To provide dust abatement and to prevent excessive loss of soil to wind erosion, a dike system and waterfowl development features were completed at the south end of the reservoir. Through a cooperative effort between Reclamation and MFWP, construction of the dike and associated facilities began in 1972 and was completed in 1978. The waterfowl facilities provide habitat for nesting and breeding, supplemental resting and feeding sites for migratory birds, public hunting, and wildlife observation opportunities for the public.

Reclamation's policy is to give preference to Federal, State, and local management agencies where second-party recreation management can be obtained. Consequently, Reclamation signed an agreement with the State of Montana for such management in 1957. For several reasons, the agreement with the State of Montana for recreation management was not renewed in 1994. Since 1995, Reclamation has had total responsibility for, among other things, the management of the recreation resources. Reclamation continues to contract with MFWP to manage the Wildlife Management Area (WMA) at the southern end of the reservoir. MFWP is the lead agency for fisheries management at Canyon Ferry Reservoir.

Both Reclamation and MFWP have prepared previous management plans for the study area—*Reservoir Management Plan, Canyon Ferry Reservoir, Montana, 1958* and *Canyon Ferry Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, 1976*, respectively. Although these documents technically stand as the current management framework for the study area, they are outdated. Recognition of this has provided major impetus for the preparation of this RMP/EA.

A draft RMP/EA was prepared by a private consultant in the early 1990s but was never finalized because MFWP returned management of Canyon Ferry Reservoir back to Reclamation. Reclamation had to put its resources toward managing the facilities rather than planning activities until 1998. As part of the 1990 draft, inventories were completed, and other pertinent information that described the existing resource conditions was gathered for all the resources within the study area. When appropriate, the information contained in the 1993 draft RMP/EA has been updated to reflect current conditions and incorporated in this document.

From 1994 through January 2002, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) assisted Reclamation in the management of the campgrounds and day-use areas within the study area and in the control of noxious weeds. BLM collected user fees, managed the camp host program, operated the Canyon Ferry Visitor Center, and was the lead for the eagle viewing program, volunteer program, interpretation, public outreach, and fire and law enforcement coordination.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

A concerted effort has been made to involve the public in planning for the environmental, land, and recreation resources at Canyon Ferry Reservoir. Public involvement began even before the inception of this RMP/EA and the 1993 draft.

In 1986, the Lewis and Clark County Commission formed a Steering Committee to address interagency management concerns at Canyon Ferry Reservoir. This local Steering Committee was comprised of representatives from the Lewis and Clark County Commission, Broadwater County Commission, Canyon Ferry Recreation Association, Townsend Chamber of Commerce, Helena Chamber of Commerce, BLM, U.S. Forest Service, and an at-large public member. Reclamation and MFWP worked closely with this Steering Committee until the decision was made to prepare the 1993 draft RMP/EA. The concept of such a plan was thoroughly discussed and reviewed with this committee, as were the public involvement needs of such a planning effort.

Once the decision was made to prepare an RMP/EA in the early 1990s, a formal public involvement plan was developed and implemented to ensure public issues and concerns were addressed. In addition, the original Steering Committee was expanded to include additional members of the public, special interest groups, and governmental agencies. The committee was renamed the MFWP Master Advisory Committee and served as a sounding board for the 1990 RMP/EA study. As discussed in the Preface, Reclamation determined that the Master Advisory Committee would not be reconvened for this effort because the issues and concerns raised then are still valid today.

Meetings

On November 19, 1998, Reclamation staff attended a public meeting at the Broadwater County Courthouse in Townsend, Montana. The Broadwater County Commissioners wanted information about the cabin sale legislation and the activities to be undertaken to make the sale possible. The group also discussed the RMP/EA and what implications its implementation would have on recreation around the reservoir.

To begin the public scoping process for this RMP/EA, six public open houses were held during the period from June 21 through June 24, 1999. Two open houses each were held in Helena

and Townsend and one each in Butte and Bozeman. Notice of the open houses was mailed to individuals in the local area and posted in the camping and day-use sites in the study area. A press release announcing the open houses was sent to area media. In addition, paid display advertisements of the open houses were purchased and appeared in local newspapers. Approximately 120 people attended the open houses. Attendees were provided an opportunity to learn about the RMP/EA and provide comments expressing their ideas, issues, and concerns orally and in writing. During the open houses, Reclamation staff recorded comments on flip charts. In addition, 26 written comments were received. As further discussed in chapter IV, these comments were used in the alternative plan formulation process. Issues and concerns raised by the public were also used to establish management goals and objectives, as discussed in chapter VI.

Before the June 1999 public meetings, Reclamation staff met with MFWP staff to ensure the RMP/EA meetings would not conflict with their development of the Upper Missouri River Reservoir Fisheries Management Plan. MFWP was concerned that the RMP/EA process would confuse the public and reduce the amount of public input to the fisheries plan. Reclamation staff ensured that the RMP/EA meetings presented information in such a manner that the fisheries plan would not be adversely impacted.

On June 24, 1999, Reclamation staff met with Lewis and Clark County planners and a county consultant to discuss the progress of the cabin sales and how those activities related to RMP/EA development.

The first draft *Canyon Ferry Reservoir Resource Management Plan/Environmental Assessment* was mailed on October 19, 2000. The initial mailing was to about 300 entities, including Tribes, agencies, local libraries, groups, and individuals. After the initial mailing, other entities requested about 300 more copies, for a total of about 600 copies distributed. The initial comment period was to end on November 17, 2000, but was extended to February 17, 2001, because of congressional and public concerns. Public information meetings were held on January 23 and 24, 2001, in Helena and Silos Inn near Townsend, Montana. Two meetings were held at each location.

On December 13, 2000, the first draft RMP/EA was presented to three classes at Broadwater High School in Townsend, Montana. The classes were studying the government and reviewed and commented on the first draft RMP/EA. Responses were prepared for these comments. The classes also attended a January 2001 public meeting at Silos Inn.

Over 300 agencies, organizations, and individuals provided about 1,000 written comments on the October 2000 draft RMP/EA by the close of the public comment period. Reclamation reviewed the comments, revised the draft RMP/EA, and issued a two-volume Second Public Draft RMP/EA in May 2002. Volume I was the second draft RMP/EA. The written comments and responses to them prepared by Reclamation's Montana Area Office (MTAO) and Denver Office staff were published and distributed as Volume II of the Second Public Draft RMP/EA.

The two-volume second public draft was mailed in early May 2002 to 635 entities, including Tribes, agencies, local libraries, groups, and individuals. In addition, the Executive Summary of the second public draft was mailed to an additional 175 agencies, groups, and individuals. The initial comment period was to end August 5, 2002, but was extended to September 20, 2002, in response to congressional and public concerns. Public information meetings to present and discuss the alternatives were held May 14, 16, 21, and 23, 2002, in Bozeman, Helena, Townsend, and Butte, Montana, respectively. Thirty-three people attended the meetings. Public hearings were held on July 30, 2002, in Townsend, Montana, and on August 1, 2002, in Helena, Montana. Forty people attended the hearings, with 10 individuals providing oral statements.

Notice of the public meetings and public hearings were sent to those on the mailing list (Tribes, agencies, local libraries, groups, and individuals). Press releases announcing the availability of the draft RMP/EA, the public meetings, and the public hearings were sent to local media. In addition, paid advertisements announcing the public meetings and public hearings were purchased and appeared in local area newspapers. The Executive Summary of the Second Public Draft RMP/EA and additional information about the RMP/EA were available on Reclamation's Great Plains Region website.

By the close of the public review and comment period for the Second Public Draft RMP/EA, Reclamation received 9 written public hearing comment documents and 70 written review comment documents in addition to the oral public hearing statements. Reclamation summarized the most important comments of the 330 oral and written comments and provided responses which appear in appendix A of the RMP/EA. The public comments were considered in the preparation of this final RMP/EA.

When public participation activities are deemed necessary during the 10-year life of the RMP, Reclamation will publicize such activities in the local newspaper. Reclamation may provide public notification prior to implementing significant capital improvement projects identified in the RMP or announcements summarizing the activities of the Canyon Ferry Working Group.

Comments and Responses

Unlike the comments and responses to the first public draft, in which Reclamation provided an individual response to each comment, the comments and responses to the second public draft were summarized. Many of the comments received were of a general nature, discussing items already in the RMP/EA, and they did not specifically suggest a revision to the RMP/EA; therefore, no revisions were made. Major comments, which suggested a specific change or clarification to an item in the RMP/EA, are documented in appendix A (a summarized version of similar comments). Responses to these comments and, if appropriate, where the changes were made, are provided for each response. Minor editorial changes have been made to the RMP/EA from the comments received, but the comments/responses have not been formally documented. In some instances, comments have been responded to by written correspondence to the commentor.

AGENCY CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as Amended

Reclamation collected information necessary to complete consultations as required by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and its implementing regulations (36 Code of Federal Regulations Part 800). Section 106 consultations with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and Indian Tribes was completed during the public review periods of the first and second drafts of the RMP/EA. No response was received from Indian Tribes or the SHPO during either review period. When specific ground-disturbing activities discussed in the RMP/EA are going to be implemented, Reclamation will again contact appropriate Indian Tribes and the SHPO to determine if they are aware of archeological sites or Traditional Cultural Properties within the study area and to learn if the Tribes or the SHPO have any related heritage resource management concerns.

Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, as Amended, and Endangered Species Act of 1973, as Amended

Reclamation consulted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) as required by the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA) and Endangered Species Act (ESA). For the draft 1993 RMP/EA, the Service provided a list of listed and proposed endangered and threatened species that may be present within the study area. On May 10, 1999, Reclamation requested an updated species list for Canyon Ferry Reservoir from the Service in Helena, Montana. No response has been received from the Service. The 1993 species list provided by the Service was checked against a current species list on the Montana Natural Resource Information System. The check showed no change in the species listing from 1993. Reclamation then evaluated the impacts to the listed species. On the basis of this information, Reclamation has determined that the RMP alternative will not affect listed, proposed, or candidate ESA species.

Because the RMP is programmatic in nature, site-specific NEPA will be required before any of the actions proposed in this RMP can be undertaken. At that time, a new species list will be required from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Indian Trust Assets

Letters requesting identification of ITAs for Native American Tribes who are currently in the area or who historically used the area were sent to the 11 Tribal Chairpersons of those Tribes and the associated Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) offices. These letters, along with copies of the first draft RMP/EA, were mailed on October 19, 2000. By letter received November 9, 2000, the BIA Rocky Mountain Region Office advised that while they had no comments from the hunting and fishing rights perspective, Reclamation's concurrent inquiry to the 11 Tribes might provide information unknown to them. Followup calls to Tribal Chairpersons were made on March 22, 2001. The Shoshone Tribe in Wyoming indicated that they probably had no ITAs at

Canyon Ferry Reservoir. Other Tribes contacted did not have a reply at the time, and no replies have been received since those calls. A copy of the second public draft RMP/EA was sent to appropriate Tribes to solicit comments concerning trust assets. No comments were received. When specific ground-disturbing activities discussed in the RMP/EA are going to be implemented, Tribal governments will be notified and asked for their input about Indian Trust Assets.

Indian Sacred Sites

On July 8, 1997, letters were sent to the six Tribal governments in eastern Montana asking for comments on Executive Order 13007. The MTAO did not receive any responses regarding sacred sites anywhere in Montana at that time. On October 19, 2000, letters requesting identification of Indian sacred sites were mailed to Native American Tribes who are currently in the area or who historically used the area. This letter, addressed to Tribal Cultural Committees or staff, was mailed with copies of the first draft RMP/EA. Followup calls to Tribal contacts were made on March 22, 2001. The Shoshone Tribe in Wyoming indicated that they probably had no sacred sites at Canyon Ferry Reservoir. Other Tribes contacted did not have a reply at the time, and no replies have been received since those calls. A copy of the second public draft RMP/EA was sent to appropriate Tribes to solicit comments concerning sacred sites. No comments were received. When specific ground-disturbing activities discussed in the RMP/EA are going to be implemented, Tribal governments will be notified and asked for their input about Indian sacred sites.

Adjacent Landowners

Reclamation is obligated to coordinate its planning efforts with local, city, county, State, and other Federal entities to ensure that its land uses are compatible with adjacent land uses (public and private). Information was solicited pertaining to the present and future uses of adjacent lands. The following entities were contacted: BLM, U.S. Forest Service, Broadwater and Lewis and Clark Counties, city of Townsend, Helena Valley Irrigation District, and MFWP.

Other Related Activities

Existing/Ongoing.—

- R** Reclamation is monitoring low dissolved oxygen conditions in the Missouri River immediately below Canyon Ferry Dam.
- R** Water quality data are collected above Canyon Ferry Reservoir at Toston and in the Missouri River immediately below the dam.

- R** Reclamation has prepared the Canyon Ferry Unit, Montana, Cabin Lease Lots Sale Final EA and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), February 2002, addressing the sale of the lease lots at Canyon Ferry Reservoir. The FONSI was signed and distributed on February 28, 2002.
- R** Reclamation has prepared the Broadwater Bay Excavation Project Final EA and FONSI, August 2000, addressing the construction of the deep water bay and boat ramp at Silos Recreation Area.

Future.—

- R** Future studies will include an analysis of permanent solutions to the low dissolved oxygen conditions which occur below the dam.
- R** Reclamation will conduct user surveys on a periodic basis.
- R** Reclamation, in cooperation with others, will be examining the potential for flushing flows on the Missouri River downstream from Canyon Ferry Reservoir.
- R** Reclamation will complete a Commercial Services Plan to assist in preparing Request for Proposals (bid packages) for concession operations upon expiration of existing concession contracts.
- R** Reclamation will conduct Facilities Condition Assessments for existing facilities to determine what upgrades should occur.
- R** Site master planning and site-specific NEPA and environmental clearances will be obtained before facilities are constructed.